
Transportation Committee

HB 3049

Brief Description: Regulating motorized foot scooters.

Sponsors: Representatives Romero, Murray, Hankins, Delvin and Simpson, G..

Brief Summary of Bill

- Regulating the operation of motorized foot scooters.

Hearing Date: 2/5/04

Staff: Jill Satran (786-7315).

Background:

In 2003, the legislature authorized the use of motorized foot scooters on public ways and in appropriately signed, non-federally funded parks. In brief, a motorized foot scooter is a two-wheeled device with handlebars that is powered by an electric or gasoline motor, capable of propelling the device with or without human propulsion. Under current law, motorized foot scooters are not licensed, no restrictions have been placed on who may operate such a device, and there are no requirements regarding mufflers.

Since the state statute has gone into effect, several local jurisdictions (including Lynnwood, Stanwood and Lake Stevens) have considered or have adopted ordinances further regulating the operation of motorized foot scooters in response to complaints about noise and safety issues. Most recently, the city of Wenatchee passed an ordinance that imposes the following restrictions:

1. requires operators to have a valid driver's license;
2. prohibits operating a motorized foot scooter on the sidewalk;
3. requires headlights under certain conditions; and
4. requires that motorized foot scooters be equipped with a muffling device.

Summary of Bill:

HB 3049 establishes the following regulations regarding the operation of motorized foot scooters. Operators of motorized foot scooters must be 16 years or older, hold a valid driver license, and wear a helmet. Operators must always maintain at least one hand on the handlebars and may not carry passengers.

Motorized foot scooters must be licensed and registered in the same way as mopeds. Motorized foot scooters may not exceed 15 miles per hour, be used on public ways where speed is limited to 25 miles per hour or less unless a bike lane is available, and they may not be operated on a fully

controlled limited access highway nor on sidewalks. Only electric-powered motorized foot scooters may be driven on non-federally funded trails or paths in parks where appropriate signage is provided.

It is unlawful to operate a motorized foot scooter while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. It is unlawful to operate a motorized foot scooter that creates sound that unreasonably disturbs or interferes with the peace and comfort of owners or occupiers of real property.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.